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NEW BOOKS REVIEWED

LA FRANCE VIVANTE EN L'AMÉRIQUE DU NORD. By M. GABRIEL HANOTAUX. Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1913.

LAST year the eminent French publicist and statesman, M. Gabriel Hanotaux, visited this country with the Champlain Mission charged to present to the American nation on behalf of the Comité France-Amérique, the replica of Rodin's sculptural conception of *La France* which now adorns the monument to the great explorer on the margin of the lake named after him. The mission traveled extensively, there were numerous dinners and addresses, and now M. Hanotaux publishes the present volume which, since it contains so much purely commemorative material, may be regarded in some sort as an official souvenir of the occasion. But it is designed to have an independent value as well. It seeks to further in its own way those ends for which the committee was organized and for which the mission was undertaken. It is, says its author, "a book of action. Its object is concrete and definite: to develop the relation between France and America. This is precisely the aim that the Comité France-Amérique has proposed to itself—the same spirit animates the two works."

It is the spirit of *rapprochement*, and mutual understanding, between the two countries which, during his own Ministry of Foreign Affairs (it was in 1897 in the midst of the acrimonious dispute between Spain and the United States that preceded the outbreak of actual hostilities), he discovered to be deplorably lacking: "Suddenly and from no one knows where, the rumor spread that France was hostile to the great American republic. Certainly we had no need to take part against our neighbors and friends of the peninsula. But if any diplomacy was ever correct and applied conscientiously the rules of neutrality, it was the French diplomacy of the period, as the documents would establish if it were necessary. However, the rumor, once launched, grew till it became menacing throughout all North America. It was an admitted and accepted fact that Americans passing through Paris were hostilely received, molested, maltreated. France was putting herself at the head of a league of hostile nations against the United States! A little more, and she would be taking part in the war! . . . It was," comments M. Hanotaux with deep feeling, "one of the worst moments of my ministerial career; it filled me with rage to be at once *sans reproche* and powerless. It needed incessant vigilance and the employment of all agencies to double this difficult cape."

So the Comité France-Amérique was formed in 1909 for the purpose of removing from the marine charts such dangerous obstacles to inter-

national navigation, and M. Hanotaux's book, reviewing the historic grounds for friendship between the two countries, and seeking to dispel popular prejudices and misconceptions, may with propriety be regarded as a votive candle placed upon the altar of *la bonne Ste. Anne* by a pious sailor who has narrowly escaped shipwreck.

It is a pleasant little book and one that may be read with profit on both sides of the Atlantic. For not only does it recall the common memories of the Revolution, and the indebtedness of the framers of our Constitution to French political philosophers—which in particular we, on our side, are sometimes prone to overlook—but it contains an acute and candid, if somewhat cursory, comparison of the characters of French and American civilization at the present day, with a view to ascertaining in what ways each people might derive advantage from study and assimilation of the other's traits and institutions.

Assuming such assimilation to be possible, what would France gain through a closer contact with North America? The quality of self-control, says M. Hanotaux, is exemplified in the self-possession of the American woman of whom he subscribes himself the admirer: "The American woman is, perhaps, the most remarkable product of the transplantation of the old races to a new soil. A young French woman of the upper classes, having received a slight tincture of American exoticism, would lose nothing of her charm and would gain in savor, in intellectual resources, and in self-possession."

But there would be other benefits as well: "A more intense effort, a more sustained working capacity, a more serious reflection, a physical and moral bearing prouder and more upright, such are the high lessons that the American people can give to a race which, very fortunately, is not afraid of multiplying its tasks and its duties."

In return, France could inoculate America with her *élan chevaleresque*, her readiness to run every risk when a high cause offers, or for the sake of the future: with her intellectual idealism, or abstract passion for truth; and with her practical sagacity in the sphere of delicate social and economic adjustments, to illustrate which M. Hanotaux analyzes several articles of the Code Civil.

But before the younger country will consent to learn from the elder, certain erroneous impressions must be effaced or corrected. M. Hanotaux admits this necessity: "France requires to be defended before America," he asserts, and proceeds loyally to this defense. That "the French people is in decadence," "that France is a species of 'Poland' destined to an early dismemberment," is an opinion that he has found prevalent in America, and he has little trouble in demolishing it with respect both to commercial wealth and to political prestige based upon military power. As for the declining birth-rate, he admits the fact, confesses to a certain disquietude concerning the consequences, but does not despair of some check being found for a phenomenon which is by no means peculiar to France, and which seems to bear some relation to the "human saturation of the tillable soil." Certainly it is a social rather than a racial phenomenon, and is governed by purely local and psychological conditions. "We know," he says, "how vigorous the French birth-rate is in Canada; we know to a less extent that the French race in Algeria is the most prolific of all European stocks. It will be the same,

probably, in all colonies where the Frenchman can live. The formula would then be this: where there is available land, men are born. And, as new lands are not lacking to France, she should have, on this head, a recourse against the law which appears to strike her."

He is less successful in dealing with the idea of decadence in the domain of art, for the reason that he falls into the common error of confusing artistic decadence with social and moral disorder. In reality it is with the latter alone that he is concerned. And, as it is a simple matter to show that the charge of immorality can by no means be brought against French literature, any more than against French life, in general, he makes his point sufficiently well for his purposes. At the same time, however, it is at least a curious commentary upon this style of criticism that at the very moment when the moralist is defending art from the capital charge of decadence in the popular sense, this art should actually be showing a more marked dearth of genuine originality and imaginative power than it has shown hitherto for several decades. French literature at the present moment exhibits distinct traits of that exhaustion which from the purely artistic point of view can alone be considered decadent. Doubtless, however, this too is but a temporary phase and has no ulterior significance.

M. Hanotaux's second paper is entitled *La Leçon du Canada*, and is an attempt to bring to bear the bitter experiences of the past upon the problems of modern territorial expansion and empire-building. For the rest, as we have said, the book is made up of collected addresses by the author, and an account of the formation and activities, to date, of the Comité France-Amérique.

THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIANITY. By JOSIAH ROYCE. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913.

Independently of all religions and of all philosophies, no one can sanely deny the importance to mankind of well-developed ethical ideas. Any mode of reasoning, therefore, which tends to clarify these ideas and to give us an even slightly better understanding of what their sanctions may be, is of inestimable value. Few persons, it may be maintained, obey conscience pure and simple; though most, perhaps, would be puzzled to state their ultimate ideals. However much, then, we may rely upon religious intuition or upon a bare "categorical imperative," it is certain that the intellectual concept—whether of God, or country, or simply of another person regarded as a model—is helpful, if not essential. From the viewpoint of conscience the betrayal of a friend, for instance, is simply an evil deed certain to be followed by remorse; but we are quite aware that when we call the betrayer a "traitor" we are taking a more advanced moral ground than when we simply call him a "villain." As in the particular, so in the general case. Broad and well-defined ideas of what we mean by such words as "traitor," and by such words again as "salvation," "sin," "atonement," and the like—all corresponding to some sort of deeply felt inner interests—such ideas, even if they cannot lead us to absolute knowledge, at any rate seem to bring us nearer the threshold of such